

arrest but been subject to forced feedings. There are reports that he is being subjected to brainwashing and anti-Falun Gong propaganda. At least 37 other Falun Gong practitioners who have family members that are residing in the U.S. are also in prison in China. Authorities also detained foreign Falun Gong practitioners from other countries. For example, in January 2003, two Australian citizens were deported for engaging in Falun Gong activities in Sichuan Province.

As my colleagues know, a sizeable number of Falun Gong practitioners reside here in the United States. They attempt to raise awareness about the horrors their fellow believers are subject to through meeting with government officials and through holding peaceful protests. Just this past August, Falun Gong members gathered on the Mall to pass out literature and inform Americans of the great suffering those in their faith are enduring. When Hu Jintao and other state leaders responsible for this purge are visiting foreign countries, Falun Gong members travel overseas to protest and raise awareness of the brutal persecution.

In response, China's persecution against the Falun Gong has moved outside of China's own borders. Large numbers of Falun Gong in the United States have reported to have been harassed. The FBI is currently investigating beatings of Falun Gong practitioners in Atlanta and Chicago. On June 23, 2003, Falun Gong practitioners in New York were harassed and physically violated by Chinese nationals associated with the consulate. Charges have been filed with the authorities. Li Li and some of her friends were involved with this incident.

Persecution of Falun Gong in China is horrific enough itself. The fact that China is now exporting its repression to weaker foreign nations under the guise of "safety" and "public order" is even worse. The cancer of China's repression is spreading all over the world. The PRC is not content to beat and torture and silence those inside its own borders. Now it is seeking to bully other nations into doing its bidding. When will this country wake up and stand up to this kind of nonsense?

I call upon all members of this body to support H. Con. Res. 304. I call on the administration to step up its efforts to speak up for the Falun Gong and out against the actions of the Chinese government immediately.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, the U.S. State Department's 2004 International Religious Freedom report for China begins as follows: "During the period covered by this report, the Government's respect for freedom of religion and freedom of conscience remained poor, especially for many unregistered religious groups and spiritual movements such as the Falun Gong."

According to the report, the arrest, detention, and imprisonment of Falun Gong practitioners continued, and practitioners who refuse to recant their beliefs are sometimes subjected to harsh treatment in prisons and reeducation-through-labor camps and there have been credible reports of deaths due to torture and abuse.

Foreign observers estimate that half of the 250,000 officially recorded inmates in the country's reeducation-through-labor camps are Falun Gong adherents.

Falun Gong blends aspects of Taoism, Buddhism, and the meditation techniques and physical exercises of qigong (a traditional Chi-

nese exercise discipline) with the teachings of Falun Gong leader Li Hongzhi. Despite its spiritual content, Falun Gong does not consider itself a religion and has no clergy or places of worship.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution calls upon the government of China to immediately end the harassment, detention, physical abuse, and imprisonment of individuals who are exercising their legitimate rights to freedom of religion, freedom of expression, and freedom of association as stated in the Constitution of the People's Republic of China.

The importance of this cannot be overstated—the protection of religious freedom is intimately connected to the protection of other fundamental human and civil rights, as well as to the growth of democracy.

A government that acknowledges and protects freedom of religion and conscience is one that understands the inherent and inviolable dignity of the human person, and is more likely to protect, the other rights fundamental to human dignity, such as freedom from arbitrary arrest or seizure, or freedom from torture and murder.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution sends an important message to the government of China that we will not look the other way when they violate the basic rights of their people, and that we demand of our partners in the international community the protection of the most basic human rights—freedom to worship freely.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my support for H. Con. Res. 304, a resolution honoring the tradition and practice of Falun Gong. As a cosponsor of this resolution, I urge my colleagues to vote yes on this important piece of legislation.

H. Con. Res. 304 calls on the Chinese Government to stop interfering with the religious and political rights of individuals in the United States to practice Falun Gong. The Chinese Government has gone so far as to spread falsehoods about Falun Gong and to harass, detain, abuse and imprison Falun Gong practitioners. The practitioners are simply exercising their legitimate right to freedom of religion and expression, and the actions of the Chinese Government conflict with international standards of freedom and human rights and must end immediately.

I have an admiration for the practitioners and adherents of Falun Gong and I am invested in the movement both in the United States and abroad. I remain committed to the task of making Falun Gong safe to practice in any country in the world. The members of Falun Gong are opposed by a Chinese government that unjustly views them as dissenters. This view is entirely without merit. In reality, Falun Gong is an inherently peaceful, apolitical movement that stresses nonviolence and meditation. Since Falun Gong was outlawed in 1999, hundreds of nonviolent practitioners have been arrested, tortured, libeled, and detained without charge or proof of any wrongdoing.

Sadly, the unwarranted and unprovoked aggression against Falun Gong has not ceased, nor is it limited to China. There have been unprovoked attacks in the United States and Falun Gong members have been subjected to a humiliating and denigrating blacklist.

One incident that I found particularly offensive took place in June 2003. Falun Gong members were attacked and beaten while holding a nonviolent protest in New York City.

In an effort to end the discrimination that confronts Falun Gong practitioners, I wrote a letter to the Manhattan District Attorney, Robert Morgenthau, requesting an investigation of this case. I hope that justice prevails in this case.

With passage of H. Con. Res. 304, we can send a strong signal condemning China's human rights abuses and we can take one step closer to ensuring Falun Gong members the freedom of religion and assembly guaranteed to them by law.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MURPHY). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 304.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO COUNTRIES OF CARIBBEAN DEVASTATED BY HURRICANES CHARLEY, FRANCES, IVAN, AND JEANNE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 496) expressing the sense of Congress with regard to providing humanitarian assistance to countries of the Caribbean devastated by Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 496

Whereas in May 2004, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) predicted that 2004 would be an above-normal Atlantic hurricane season;

Whereas from August to September 2004 Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne devastated countries of the Caribbean and the southern, midwestern, and eastern regions of the United States;

Whereas the people of the United States, who have encountered the harsh consequences of the recent hurricanes, can empathize with the countries of the Caribbean as they begin the recovery process;

Whereas Hurricane Frances displaced 800 people and destroyed 80 homes in the Bahamas;

Whereas Hurricane Frances caused an estimated \$125,000,000 in damage to the islands of the Bahamas;

Whereas four hurricanes have struck the region within five weeks;

Whereas 90 percent of homes in Grenada sustained significant damage as a result of Hurricane Ivan;

Whereas the International Committee of the Red Cross estimates that 60,000 of the 95,000 inhabitants of Grenada were made homeless as a result of the devastation;

Whereas Hurricane Ivan is the worst natural disaster to hit Jamaica in 50 years;

Whereas an estimated 13,000 Jamaicans were displaced during Hurricane Ivan;

Whereas more than 60 people died and hundreds were injured as a result of Hurricanes Charley, Frances, and Ivan;

Whereas as a result of Hurricane Jeanne, at least 2,000 people have died in Haiti while it is estimated that another 1,000 people are currently missing;

Whereas many others have died in the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico due to Hurricane Jeanne;

Whereas the United States Agency for International Development reports that there is flooding in more than 80 percent of Gonaives, Haiti, and more than 30 percent of Port-de-Paix, Haiti;

Whereas hurricane recovery assistance is being sought from the Caribbean-American community, the European Union, and Canada;

Whereas the financial burden of providing emergency and reconstruction assistance to the devastated countries is much greater than the Caribbean region can sustain by itself;

Whereas the cost of providing humanitarian emergency assistance to the countries of the Caribbean continues to increase with each natural disaster;

Whereas the cost of assisting Grenada, Jamaica, the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and other island nations with reconstruction after the hurricane season of 2004 could exceed \$250,000,000;

Whereas in addition to disaster relief, governments of the countries of the Caribbean are under pressure to secure their communities and prevent looters and other criminals from causing further harm to their citizens who are struggling to recover from the devastation caused by the hurricanes;

Whereas the United States Agency for International Development's Office of United States Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) is coordinating with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA) and members of the Eastern Caribbean Donor Group (ECDG), including the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) to provide urgently needed food, potable water, temporary shelter, and other basic necessities;

Whereas multilateral development banks, such as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, and other international organizations, such as the United Nations and the Organization of American States, have joined the United States in providing urgently needed assistance to the countries of the Caribbean that have suffered the most from the effects of the hurricanes;

Whereas the damage caused by the hurricanes have demonstrated that proper building and housing codes that are consistently enforced significantly reduce the human and financial toll caused by natural disasters;

Whereas the Caribbean region is recognized as the third border of the United States and the economic turmoil caused by the hurricanes of August and September 2004 will have an effect on the United States; and

Whereas the countries of the Caribbean will need significant assistance from the international community for both relief and reconstruction efforts: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) commends the governments of the countries of the Caribbean for their efforts to respond and assist the people of the region after the devastation caused by Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne from August to September 2004;

(2) commends the efforts of the Caribbean-American community to provide relief to family and friends suffering in the region;

(3) supports the efforts of the United States Government to assist in coordinating international efforts to help the people of the region, particularly in Grenada, Jamaica, Haiti, and the Bahamas, with assessing damage and providing relief to affected communities;

(4) urges the international community to take all necessary steps to provide emergency relief and support reconstruction efforts; and

(5) urges the President, acting through the Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development to—

(A) continue to make available to private volunteer organizations, United Nations agencies, and regional institutions the necessary funding to mitigate the effects of the recent natural disasters that have devastated the countries of the Caribbean; and

(B) provide assistance for the promulgation and enforcement of housing and building codes in the countries of the Caribbean.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN).

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H. Con. Res. 496, the concurrent resolution now under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume, and I rise in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 496, expressing the sense of Congress with regard to providing humanitarian assistance to the countries of the Caribbean devastated by Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne.

As a Member whose home State of Florida has experienced firsthand the fury of these hurricanes, my heart goes out to our neighbors in the Caribbean as they begin to rebuild their lives amidst the debris. Thus, at a time when hundreds of thousands of people across the Caribbean are coping with the destruction left by these four recent hurricanes, this resolution could not be more timely.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) for introducing this measure, and I would like to thank our Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere chairman, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BALLENGER), as well as the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE), the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), and our leadership for their efforts in helping to bring this resolution to the floor this evening.

Mr. Speaker, in August and September of this year, Hurricanes Char-

ley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne swept over the Caribbean, battering the islands of Grenada, the Bahamas, Jamaica, the Caymans, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, and other smaller islands. In their wake, they left nearly 2,000 dead, many thousands more injured and hundreds of thousands homeless. The cost in lost homes and property has yet to be tallied, but in many of these places the destruction has been near total.

While the humanitarian response has been immediate, a long-term recovery plan is needed to prevent further suffering. I would like to commend the administration for immediately dispatching to the Caribbean emergency relief teams from USAID and the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance. Through their efforts, humanitarian relief supplies have been reaching the affected areas and the many who are now suffering. As we speak, the Bush administration is preparing a recovery package which will likely be included in an emergency supplemental appropriations bill that is expected on the floor at a future date.

But this is only the beginning. As with the recovery and the reconstruction of our own communities in those States ravaged or affected by these hurricanes, the full magnitude of the situation and the total need will not become clear for weeks to come. However, our friends and neighbors in the Caribbean need our help now. It is, therefore, my hope that this resolution will pass the House, as I believe it serves as an official call to action to help relieve the suffering caused by these recent hurricanes. Therefore, I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this important resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to begin by thanking the gentlewoman from Florida, also our ranking member, the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE), along with my colleagues on this side of the aisle and on the other side of the aisle, including the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BALLENGER), for their support and for their commitment to make sure that this important resolution moves off of this floor tonight.

I also want to thank our staff, Paul Oostburg, Ted Brennan, Caleb McCarry, also Khalil Munir and Jamila Thompson of my staff, who all worked very, very hard, very diligently, and very quickly to craft this bill before us today.

Mr. Speaker, this is a bipartisan resolution; and it is a very minor, very small resolution in terms of the enormity of the disaster that it is addressing, but it is a resolution that expresses the need for humanitarian assistance to hurricane-ravaged Caribbean countries. H. Con. Res. 496 acknowledges the hardship endured by all Caribbean islands, it recognizes the

international response to the tragedy, and it outlines the need for relief and reconstruction efforts throughout the affected areas.

Americans, all of us, especially Floridians and Californians, know firsthand the suffering experienced by natural disasters: hurricanes, fires, tornadoes and earthquakes. For weeks, we have watched the devastation throughout the region in Grenada, the Bahamas, Jamaica, Haiti, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, and Barbados, just to mention a few of the affected countries.

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Four hurricanes struck within 5 weeks. Over 440,000 individuals were displaced. This is hard to even imagine.

Mr. Speaker, we need to step up and lend a helping hand. We cannot sit back and wait as people suffer in Florida and in the Caribbean. I understand that the administration has proposed \$50 million in emergency spending for relief to the region, and I must say that that is a good, small, very small, step for a start. But we know that much more will be needed to help the entire region.

In Grenada, the hardest hit island by Hurricane Ivan, the land is barren. Countless homes are destroyed, and schools will not open until 2005. What is going to happen to the young people of Grenada who need and want to go to school? The Grenadian Ambassador, the Honorable Dennis Antoine, shared with me the devastation to his country. Ivan the Terrible caused, he said, "The total destruction of the police headquarters, the official residence of both the governor general and the prime minister, parliament house, schools, churches, roads, bridges, one of two hospitals, the airport tower and the national stadium. More than 70 percent of the population is virtually homeless, and there is in excess of 60,000 persons needing relief."

Stories were similar in the Bahamas where all 29 of the inhabited islands felt the impact of Hurricane Frances. A few weeks later, Hurricane Jeanne assaulted Grand Bahama and Abaco where the flood waters were just receding. In Jamaica, the largest English-speaking Caribbean country, 18,000 people were displaced by Hurricane Ivan. Many other Caribbean countries affected by the storms have remained so focused on assisting their neighbors that they have not even had the chance to fully assess their own damage. However, the preliminary estimates for damages in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, a country that sustained lesser harm, is more than their government's annual budget.

For the Bahamas and Grenada, the damage cost total is more than \$1 billion, but we must remember that more than 15 islands throughout the region were affected. Throughout the Caribbean, primary crops, such as bananas, nutmeg, cocoa and sugar are just totally destroyed. Clearly, Caribbean economies are simply overwhelmed.

There is a Haitian saying that an empty sack cannot stand up. More than 2,000 Haitians lost their lives. Hundreds remain missing. My heart breaks for those suffering and struggling. The Haitian people are resilient people, but we must help.

Tropical Storm Jeanne was not even a category 1 hurricane when it demolished the Haitian towns of Gonaives and Port de Paix. It exemplifies how even the smallest natural disasters wreak havoc on the poorest people. In Haiti's flood-torn cities, children sleep on tin roofs because flood waters have still not subsided. Gunshots are heard in darkness as thieves and thugs continue to steal from the people and cheat them of their chance for protection and peace. Men and women dig mass graves, scrambling to identify the bodies of lost loved ones. And the government cannot even provide security to distribute emergency supplies.

We need to join the efforts of the international community and show support for all the affected countries. The Caribbean-American community and neighboring Caribbean nations responded to the calls of assisting the hardest hit countries immediately. Across our borders, churches, nonprofit organizations, businesses and activists have rushed to support the entire region. Although the United States Agency for International Development assisted in some relief efforts, the United States Government can, we must, do more. We must work with other donors and Caribbean countries to plan and support the relief and reconstruction effort.

Our third border is in great need and the United States needs to show our support for the entire region. Again, I want to thank my colleagues for supporting this effort. Again, this is a very good first start. I look forward to working with our appropriators, including our colleague from Detroit, Michigan (Ms. KILPATRICK), who has been a tremendous advocate for the region, in order to obtain adequate emergency funding for the more than 15 Caribbean countries devastated by these hurricanes. Time is of the essence, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) who is a leader not only in the Virgin Islands but for the entire Caribbean region who knows firsthand and has experienced firsthand the devastation of natural disasters.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I am a cosponsor of House Concurrent Resolution 496, and I rise in strong support of the resolution which calls on Congress to support badly and immediately needed humanitarian assistance to the Caribbean countries which were devastated by the recent hurricanes, as we provide aid to the people of Florida; and our hearts go out to them as well.

Mr. Speaker, Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Gaston, Ivan and Tropical

Storm Jeanne have caused widespread damage in large numbers of our neighboring Caribbean countries. We have seen the tragedy in Haiti where Hurricane Jeanne resulted in more than 2,000 deaths, many more still missing and over a quarter of a million people homeless. In Grenada, Hurricane Ivan destroyed 78 percent of the island's electrical system and homes as well as hospitals, schools and their spice industry. And Hurricane Frances has caused an estimated \$125 million in damage to the islands of the Bahamas. More than 440,000 individuals have been displaced throughout the region.

These storms left a path of destruction across a region that is our third border and which was already stressed and whose economies were already heavily burdened in part by our own homeland security needs. They do not have the capacity to respond. These countries, which include six of the top ten most indebted countries in the world, are in desperate need of our assistance for everything, emergency health services, water, shelter, food and infrastructure.

To put the situation into perspective, the U.N.'s Office For the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in an October 1 report pointed out that Grenada, one of the smallest countries in the western hemisphere, bases its economy on tourism and agriculture and imports most of the food that it consumes. The majority of the island's 102,000 inhabitants make their living out of these two vital sectors which were severely hit by Hurricane Ivan. The negative impact of the disaster has been enormous at all levels and in all sectors, disrupting the livelihood of every single Grenadian and causing serious damage to the backbone of the country's economy.

Mr. Speaker, President Bush and the administration have announced they will provide \$50 million to assist the region, specifically Haiti, Jamaica and Grenada, with small amounts for the Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. That is not enough. Much more will be needed to help the entire region. Because so many of the economies of the countries in the region have been severely damaged because vital income-producing crops were destroyed, and replanting and new seeding processes will not yield salable produce for several years, the members of the Congressional Black Caucus have called for an appropriation of \$500 million for reinforcement and alternative economic development.

Mr. Speaker, my district is part of the region. We know the devastation of hurricanes, not only to the physical structures but to the emotions and to the families, and the difficulty of recovery. Even with the strong and resilient spirit of the people of the Caribbean, things are very, very difficult today.

I join my colleagues in urging this body to support the adoption of this

resolution as well as our request for additional funding for the region.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands for that very powerful statement and for laying out what is at stake and the reality of life during these very tragic times for those in the Caribbean region.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) whose commitment to the Caribbean is longstanding and unwavering.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from California for helping to organize us to be able to address this most important issue this evening.

I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 496, a resolution that simply supports humanitarian assistance to countries of the Caribbean devastated by Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan and Jeanne. The recent hurricanes have had devastating impacts on several Caribbean nations. In Grenada, Hurricane Ivan destroyed 90 percent of the homes and 78 percent of the electrical system, as well as numerous government buildings, hospitals, schools and churches. Approximately 60,000 of the island's 95,000 inhabitants were left homeless. In Jamaica, 18,000 people were displaced by Hurricane Ivan, which was the worst natural disaster to hit Jamaica in 50 years. The Bahamas incurred an estimated \$125 million in damage as a result of Hurricanes Frances and Jeanne. In Haiti, Hurricane Jeanne caused extensive flooding and left 300,000 people homeless. More than 1,500 Haitians were killed, and another 900 are still missing. Thousands of people are in desperate need of food, clean water, emergency shelter and medical care. Relief efforts continue to be hampered by water and mud covering the main roads, and stagnant waters have given rise to a large mosquito population that could lead to a malaria epidemic.

The nations of the Caribbean are small island nations that do not have the capacity to respond to the widespread death and destruction caused by hurricanes of this magnitude. Immediate assistance from the United States is critical to enable these countries to meet the emergency needs of their people and begin to rebuild damaged homes and infrastructure.

I am thankful that the President did show some concern, and he proposed \$50 million in supplemental appropriations to cover disaster relief for the nations of the Caribbean that have been devastated by hurricanes and tropical storms. But it is a very small amount, and it cannot begin to meet the tremendous needs of thousands of Haitians, let alone the needs of our other Caribbean neighbors. The affected countries and territories include Bahamas, Barbados, the Cayman Islands, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Lucia, Puerto Rico, St. Vincent, the Grenadines, Trinidad, Tobago, the Turks and Caicos, even Ven-

ezuela, Cuba, the U.S. Virgin Islands, have all felt the devastation of these hurricanes. So we need a lot more to respond to this terrible devastation.

Even though the President has proposed \$50 million in supplemental appropriations, it is a small amount, and it cannot begin to meet the tremendous needs of thousands of Haitians, let alone the needs of all of these other countries. The Congressional Black Caucus is on record now in asking the President for at least \$500 million in disaster relief to mount an effective response. Of course, I would urge my colleagues to vote for H. Con. Res. 496. I would also urge my colleagues to provide a supplemental appropriation of at least \$500 million in disaster assistance to help our Caribbean neighbors rebuild their homes and their lives after these unprecedented storms. This resolution does not have that amount in it, and we know that we must do the work with the Appropriations Committee, but this is a resolution that would give recognition to this tremendous devastation that has taken place and squarely place us on record in wanting to respond to it.

I am very thankful for the opportunity to share with the gentlewoman from California this concern as we demonstrate through this resolution.

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, I am a co-sponsor of H. Con. Res. 496. I fully support helping to relieve the suffering of people in the Caribbean. The news reports of the death and destruction in Haiti, Grenada and elsewhere in the Caribbean is just terrible. We all want to reach out and help our neighbors who are suffering.

USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance has been on the ground distributing emergency aid since just after these storms hit. The \$50 million aid package proposed by the Administration is, by all measures, a good start.

But, it should not be considered an end to U.S. assistance. The current proposal represents what the Administration believes can be spent in the first year. By way of comparison, \$52 million was expended during the first year of implementing disaster reconstruction after Hurricane Mitch hit in 1999. I expect to see more aid going to the Caribbean in subsequent years.

Mr. Speaker, while I believe that \$50 million is not sufficient to meet the needs of the Caribbean in the long term, I do believe it is enough to meet the immediate needs of those nations hardest hit. To meet the long term needs of these countries, I would support an effort to provide additional reconstruction funds. Although I am retiring, I am willing to work with my colleagues to secure long term assistance for the Caribbean nations before I go. I hope that my colleagues here tonight will join me in this area.

I thank my colleague from California for bringing this important resolution recognizing the terrible suffering inflicted on the Caribbean by the same hurricanes that did so much damage to our own country. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 496, a bi-partisan effort urging that Congress support humanitarian

assistance to Caribbean countries devastated by the recent hurricanes.

Four hurricanes—Charley, Frances, Ivan and Jeanne—hit the region within five weeks. The affected countries and territories include the Bahamas, Barbados, the Cayman Islands, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Lucia, Puerto Rico, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, the Turks and Caicos, Venezuela, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, but the burden is felt by all. More than 440,000 individuals displaced throughout the region.

Tropical Storm Jeanne killed more than 2,000 people in Haiti, and hundreds remain missing. Men and women dig mass graves, scrambling to identify the bodies of lost loved ones. An estimated 300,000 people remain homeless as a result of the floods.

With eight weeks left to the 2004 Atlantic Hurricane season, the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA) is urging the Caribbean to remain vigilant. The call comes against the background of an updated hurricane season forecast yesterday which calls for three more storms and two hurricanes this month with a 33 percent chance of a land falling storm and 17 percent chance of a land falling hurricane.

The Administration announced providing \$50 million to assist the region—specifically Haiti, Jamaica, and Grenada with small amounts for the Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines. This is a good start, but much more will be needed to help the entire region.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to reiterate my support for H. Con. Res. 496 and urge the Administration to provide even more aid to assist the region.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MURPHY). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 496, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

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SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MURPHY). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

THE JUDGES OF MADISON COUNTY, PART THREE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. NORWOOD) is recognized for 5 minutes.